

Report of the Capital Improvements Planning Committee

Introduction

The Capital Improvements Planning Committee is charged with reviewing “proposed capital outlays, projects and improvements involving major tangible assets and projects” with a view to recommending and prioritizing those capital improvement projects which should be undertaken over the next five years. These assets and projects are defined as those costing over \$25,000 and having a useful life of five years or more. Our charge is to prepare a capital budget for the next fiscal year, considering the relative need, impact, timing and cost of the various requested expenditures, as well as to project a capital program for the next five years. The following narrative and the chart at the end of this report outline the FY2022 capital budget, as well as projections for the capital program for the next five years, through FY2027.

Summary

If all of the FY2022 requests are approved, we will spend a total of \$2,154,309 on new and existing capital expenditures (including regionally assessed debt). For FY2022, this spending breaks down as follows:

- \$1,268,567 in general fund debt payments
- \$127,616 on Town projects funded by CPA
- \$758,126 tax levy, free cash or redirected prior appropriations

Policy

- The Town and the Board of Selectmen shall adhere to the Capital Improvement by-law, by ensuring that all capital spending requests are placed on a Town Meeting warrant only after they have been evaluated and prioritized by the Capital Improvements Planning Committee.
- The Town’s capital improvement program shall provide for consistent debt service and capital spending that is as close to level as possible over time, so that taxes do not fluctuate excessively due to capital spending.
- The Town and the Finance Committee shall support maintenance budget lines adequate to maintain the value and condition of the Town’s buildings and equipment in a proactive manner.
- The Facilities Maintenance Program shall incorporate energy efficiency as a central part of its mission and shall work in concert with the Energy Committee to carry that out.

Recommendations

- The Committee recommends that the Town continue the process that will result in a formal and permanent Facilities Management Program, by ensuring that the implementation phase is adequately staffed and funded going forward.
- The Committee recommends that the Board of Selectmen work with the Council on Aging and the other two member towns to continue a needs assessment and feasibility study during FY2022 for a future renovation of

the Howes House. Further, that the use of Community Preservation Historic funds be pursued as part of the funding for renovations.

Recent Events Affecting the Capital Program

- The 2020 Town Meeting voted unanimously to reduce the Town's reliance on fossil fuels to 50% by 2030 and to eliminate it by 2040 and further to ensure that the Town's electricity comes from 50% renewable sources by 2030 and 100% by 2040. Achieving this goal will have a material effect on the Town's capital expenditures, so should begin incrementally but immediately.
- Progress has continued on catching up deferred maintenance on town buildings, and prioritizing and implementing a long term facilities plan. The Facilities Management committee has been meeting regularly to move this process ahead and to develop and prioritize the upcoming town-wide facilities maintenance needs. Beginning with FY2022, only incidental maintenance and custodial expenses will remain in the individual departmental budgets.

Requested Capital Projects FY2022 – FY2027

A chart with accompanying notes for the FY2021 items follows. The Committee has set priorities for the capital requests using this coding:

<u>Priority Code</u>	<u>Meaning</u>
1	This project must be completed , as it is necessary for public health and safety, to meet our legal obligations or for reasons of fiscal prudence.
2	This project should be completed to maintain or expand our existing assets.
3	This project is useful but not essential at this time.

(Please note that projects are rated according to their present priority, so may get a higher priority as time goes by.)

Affordable Housing. The Old Courthouse Road project is underway, and the Affordable Housing Committee is working on developing the next project, but is not requesting any funds for projects in West Tisbury at this time. There will be a request to designate the lot at the intersection of State and Lambert's Cove Roads for Affordable Housing use.

Energy Committee. In response to the passage of the 100% Renewable by 2040 resolution at the Town Meeting, the Energy Committee will be looking at ways to renovate our municipal buildings so that they are more energy-efficient and ready to be converted to meeting all their energy needs with electricity generated from renewable sources. They are working on the best possible way to approach this work and will develop a master plan for how to achieve the goal over the next number of years. The intent is for the cost of additional solar arrays and battery banks to be funded by grants or developers, but the cost of making town buildings ready for these installations will need to be borne by the Town.

The first building might be the Public Safety Building which was built in 1999. A roof solar array and battery bank would allow the Town to achieve greater resilience in times of prolonged power failure by having our Fire, Police and Emergency Services assured of continual power at such times. In order to achieve this, the building will need a new roof before a rooftop solar array can be installed. In addition, it would be wise to provide greater levels of insulation and airtightness with the new roof, to reduce energy bills in this location. The Energy Committee hopes to have a plan and cost estimates ready to present by the 2022 Annual Town Meeting.

Fire Department. There will be a \$100,000 request for an appropriation to the Fire Equipment Stabilization Fund toward the next fire truck. The next truck purchase planned is a tank truck, expected to be needed in about four years.

Highways. Smaller scale road repair and resurfacing projects will be undertaken as needed using available Ch. 90 state grant funds. The next road and drainage projects to be addressed will be on Indian Hill and Panhandle Roads. In addition, there will be a \$100,000 request to repair/replace a failing culvert under Tiah's Cove Road; road repairs following this work will then be requested but their estimated cost is not known at this time.

The Planning Board has formed a subcommittee to work on the Town's participation in the State's Complete Streets program. A Complete Streets Policy was adopted in 2017 and a prioritization plan was completed in the spring of 2018. They received \$125,000 in CPA grant funding at the October 2020 Town meeting for matching funds to complete an engineering study for a shared-use path along Old County Road. At the same Town meeting the town designated the right of way on Old County Road as recreational, allowing CPA funding to be used. Complete Streets grants fund construction costs, but cannot be used for engineering.

Mill Brook Watershed. The Mill Brook Watershed Study Planning Committee published its final report and presented it at a public meeting in June 2018. The report's key findings, conclusions and recommendations to the Selectmen now form the basis for continued data collection/monitoring and a management plan funded initially in FY2020 through CPA; there will be a second request for \$40,000 in CPA funds at the 2021 town meeting to complete this monitoring and data collection work.

Police. The police have adopted a program of replacing one vehicle every 18 months. The FY2022 \$30,000 request is for the remaining 2/3 needed for a police vehicle, to be purchased in FY2023.

Schools. An effort is underway for several alternatives to repair, upgrade and renovate or replace the high school building. The school has thus far been unable to secure MSBA (state) funding support for this work. An island-

wide plan needs to be developed and implemented. There will be requests totaling \$107,905 from the high school for West Tisbury's share of two electric buses, upgrades to technology infrastructure, and exterior shingling of the superintendent's office. Planning for future requests over the next five years are being developed but are not known at this time.

In addition, the Up Island Regional School District will seek a total of \$363,847 in funding beyond the regular budget assessment for repairs to both schools. The work includes the completion of exterior window and door upgrades at the Chilmark School, as well as the final section of roof repair/replacement at the West Tisbury School. There will also be a new walk-in freezer/refrigerator and a new elevator at the West Tisbury School. It is expected that requests in future years will not be as large, but the five year capital plan is under development and not available at this time.

Sheriff's Communication System. The island-wide E-911 communication system is undergoing major upgrades and maintenance over the next few years; the island towns have agreed to pay a proportionate share of this expense. The FY2022 request is for West Tisbury's share of the third year of this new arrangement.

Town Buildings. In FY2014, the Town began to set aside funds annually toward future building repairs and maintenance in a stabilization fund. Very substantial progress has been made toward bringing a town-wide Facilities Management Plan to fruition. This work has helped the Town to implement the migration of major maintenance items to one town-wide line in the annual budget. The COVID-19 pandemic has delayed the execution of a number of funded projects, so there will only be a \$50,000 funding request for FY2022 to build up the stabilization fund.

The Howes House, which houses the Up Island Council on Aging, will need a full renovation approximately two to three years from now. The building was last renovated and expanded in the late 1980s. The Town began a preliminary space needs evaluation during FY2020; this work will continue during 2021 with \$20,000 in funding approved for a feasibility study.

Tri-Town Ambulance. There are three Tri-Town ambulances, one stationed in each town. Since the ambulance service began charging insurance companies, it has reserved 25% of the receipts for such capital expenditures. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic 100% of the receipts will be applied to the operational budget for FY2022, but the reserves are still expected to be sufficient to purchase the next ambulance, which will likely be purchased in FY2022 or FY2023. The ambulance service goal is to purchase a new ambulance every five to six years thereafter.

Plans have also been developed to construct a new building to house the Ambulance administrative office and equipment barn in the Town of

Chilmark. West Tisbury may bear up to one-third of this facility's cost, the total cost for which is currently estimated at \$5.8 million. These costs may be reduced somewhat by future ambulance receipts. Assuming approval by Chilmark at their 2021 annual town meeting, construction will begin in FY2022 and the building should be completed within two years.

The Committee thanks the Town departments and regional entities for their assistance and input. We are still missing one At-Large member, and encourage any interested parties to contact the Selectmen's Office.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael Colaneri (Assessors)

Richard Knabel (At-Large)

Kathy Logue (Treasurer)

Bruce Stone (Town Accountant)

Henry Geller (Planning Board)

Cynthia Mitchell (Selectmen)

Clark Rattet (Finance Committee)

Joseph Tierney (Building Inspector)